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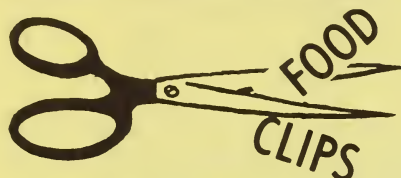
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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Did you know that a banana may be entirely brown and yet the flesh will be in prime condition?

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Overmature cherries lack flavor according to USDA marketing specialists. You can tell by shrivelling, dried stems and a generally dull appearance. Look for the very dark color which is an indication of good flavor and maturity in sweet cherries.

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Grapefruit is picked "tree ripe" and is ready to eat just as soon as you buy it in the store. Those scale, scars or thorn scratches--even discoloration--seldom affects the eating quality of the fruit.

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When preparing fresh vegetables--remember, remove bruised, wilted, yellowed or tough portions from fresh vegetables but trim sparingly to avoid excessive loss of food and nutrients.

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Light brown markings on the outside skin have no effect on the flesh of the avocado. Some avocados are shades of green--some turn maroon, brown or even purplish--black as they ripen.

THE DIET PLATE

—And The School Lunch

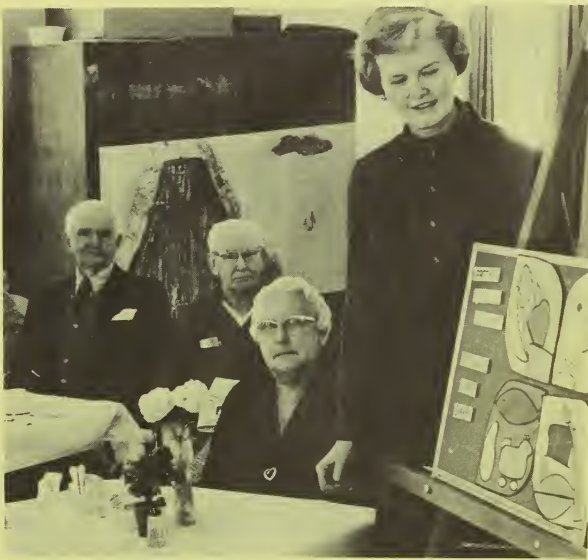
Students with weight problems in the Tucson, Arizona school district are trying something new--a special "type A" diet plate. It suits the needs and desires of young people who need to eat well--but who also need to limit their calories...usually for health reasons.

What do they serve on the diet plate? The cafeteria manager runs a 1 week menu cycle--tuna salad, green beans, tomato slice, bread and butter, fruit and milk. Then such entrees as cottage cheese, beef patties, surf patties (made of tuna) and the most popular plate, a taco salad. Each lunch contains four ounces of protein and offers a choice of whole or skim milk. It's nutritionally sound and appealing to the students. The growing clientele includes school athletes who need to maintain a specific weight.

Nutrition education is not a job that comes easy--but with this type of lunch offering stressing "weight awareness" the students are realizing that a complete nutritious lunch can still be low in calories. About 50% of the students in the district are now preferring the Special "Type A" lunch.



Paraprofessional (left) introduces Iowa homemakers to Extension's new housing van--called "Ship Shape"--where homemakers learn how to do weatherstripping, fix dripping faucets, repair electric cords, etc.

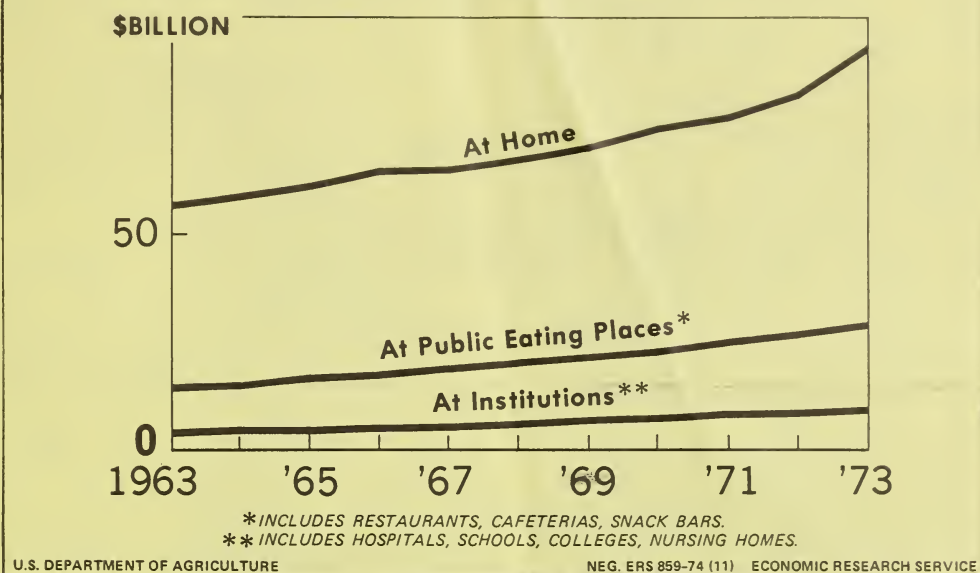


(Left) At a recent meeting with senior citizens, Becky Deede, Scott County Extension home economist describes how to plan low cost nutritious meals.



In bottom photo--Iowa Extension home economist Mabel Flint talks about beef prices on station WOC-TV Davenport, Iowa

CONSUMER EXPENDITURES ON U.S. FARM FOODS AT HOME AND AWAY FROM HOME, 1963-73



THE FOOD WE EAT--- Away From Home

American consumers spent over \$132 billion for U.S. farm foods in 1973--About 70 percent of this was purchased primarily from retail foodstores to eat at home, according to a report by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. About 30 percent was spent by people who eat away from home--and by institutions.

Eating away from home is a result of rising incomes, changing lifestyles, and the general mobility in this country today. In recent years, the so-called "fast food" establishments--some chain outlets and franchised outlets--has increased for hamburgers, pizza, fried chicken, fish, and ethnic foods.

In 1972, according to the report, single-unit establishments made up 90 percent of all eating places and accounted for 74 percent of the sales. In contrast, firms operating 11 or more units accounted for 7 percent of total establishments and 17 percent of sales in that year.

PICNIC TIME

— Serve It Safely

Planning a picnic is easy. But, planning a safe picnic takes a little thought. First, before you plan the menu, consider whether you are equipped to carry perishable foods a long distance...if distance to the picnic site is apparent.

If you are planning a four-hour trip to a picnic site, on a 90 degree day, you may have a serious problem. Food that starts out "chilled" can become warm -- and dangerous -- before you realize what has happened. Food borne bacteria doesn't need much help...it develops sooner than you may think according to the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Insulated bags or chests are important to your safe planning. Be sure to use ice, dry ice, or reusable cold packs. Don't depend on cold foods staying cold just because they're in insulated bags -- especially on a warm summer day.

Perishable foods such as cream pies, seafoods, and other dishes made with eggs, fish, meat, and poultry should be kept COLD (below 40°F) --and food should not stand at room temperature more than 2 hours before it is to be eaten.

If you're carrying hot foods (above 140°F) you need to make sure that they remain HOT. Bacteria, remember, grows best in lukewarm foods.

Another of the important items to consider is how much time will it take to prepare the food. Don't try to feed more people than you can handle.

You have to consider the size and the quantity of the cooking equipment you have and your supply of eating utensils and dishes. Don't have "make-shift" type containers for the final stages of transporting your food to the picnic site. Picnics and holiday meal times are fun...Make them safe...Enjoy your picnic.

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535-A Office of Communications/Press Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 Or Telephone 202-447-5898.